

What Changed and Why?

To meet language demands of college- and career-readiness standards, **WIDA is raising the bar for English language proficiency.** K-12 English Learners (ELs) taking the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 (online or paper/pencil) will need to showcase higher language skills to achieve the same proficiency level scores. This is the result of a process called **Standard Setting**. Standard setting determines the student performance required for each proficiency level through a series of decisions made by expert panels of teachers as well as district and state English learner administrators. Please keep in mind that available proficiency levels did not change.

The last WIDA standard setting was conducted in 2007. Since then...

- New academic content standards and assessments have increased the academic language demands on all students to be successful, or career- and college-ready.
- The 2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards was developed with input from leaders in the field and educators in WIDA Consortium member states.
- WIDA has released enhanced ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessments, based on the 2012 Amplification of the ELD Standards, and now has many students testing online.
- The online speaking assessment is now centrally rated rather than scored locally by educators.

When standards and accountability systems change, it is good practice to conduct standard setting studies to ensure that results of an assessment reflect up-to-date achievement goals.

This gives everyone confidence that the test provides the information it should to support decisions impacting students' education.

What does this mean for the assessment and what effect will this have on scores?

As a result of the standard setting, WIDA's Proficiency Levels are now more closely aligned with the academic proficiency of career- and college-ready standards. While the test content, scoring, and item difficulty have not changed, students taking the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 will need to show more linguistic proficiency to receive higher scores. **With the increased rigor, our expectation is that some students' scores may go down.** However, this will also allow districts to ensure that students are receiving the language support they need to be successful.

As the new WIDA Screener is directly tied to WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, the results of the standard setting mean that the WIDA Screener will also see an increase in rigor over the W-APT. As a result, districts should be aware that more students may be deemed eligible for EL services than were previously.

Please note that these changes do not impact the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

How will this affect student growth on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?

Because of the increased rigor, **students' proficiency levels may seem to increase more slowly.** The good news is that with the transition from the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), we no longer have Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). As we are now measuring EL success differently, think of growth as being reset, with 2016-2017 as the base year to start fresh.

How does this affect the ability for districts to exit students from a program?

Per previous and current federal law, Michigan has established common entrance and exit criteria guidance. This guidance establishes proficiency scores and additional criteria for exiting students from EL services. The determination on reclassifying students as English proficient should not come lightly. Remember that ELs, as with all students, need to receive equitable services. Exiting a student too early could result in academic challenges for the student across all of the content areas. For this reason, the WIDA cut scores necessary for making exiting decisions will not be changing for the 2017-18 school year. MDE and its educator stakeholders will continue to revisit the Entrance and Exit Protocol yearly to ensure fair criteria are being implemented while still ensuring high standards for Michigan's EL students.

What does my district need to do?

Continue to serve your students. This assessment is about students being able to demonstrate their language abilities. Although the results can help inform curriculum, instruction and assessment of ELs, districts should contextualize the data received from the assessment. Student performance in individual domains should be examined to determine relative strengths and goals for the student.

Who do I contact if I still have questions?

If you have general questions about the changes, please contact WIDA Client Services Center at 866-276-7735 or by email at help@wida.us. You may also find additional information on the [WIDA website](http://wida.us/proficiency) (wida.us/proficiency).

If you have accountability questions, please contact the MDE Accountability Office at 877-560-8378 or send an email to MDE-Accountability@michigan.gov.

If you have questions about the Entrance and Exit Protocol, please contact the MDE Office of Field Services at 517-373-6066.

WIDA Webinars

- WIDA and MDE are hosting a webinar that will explain the reasons for the anticipated changes in students' proficiency level scores as well as suggestions for how you can communicate with students and families, administrators, and other educators on how this might impact them.
- If you are unable to watch the webinar live, it will be recorded and posted to the WIDA.us site.

2017 ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Score Changes Webinar

May 22, 2017
2:00 – 3:00 PM

- Please check upcoming Spotlights for more information on joining the webinar.

WIDA Resources

- In April 2017, WIDA will be providing additional resources surrounding the score changes including:
- Video and Discussion Guide about the changes
- Educator Materials including PowerPoint slides and handouts for teachers and administrators
- Parent/Family resources, including "Understanding Your Child's ACCESS Score" (translated into 47 languages) and individual Student Score Notes